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By

Sherman W. Adams

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[Read before the Connecticut Historical Society, February 4, 1896]

The Native and Wild Mammals of Connecticut

By

Sherman W. Adams

Hartford, Conn.
Press of The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company
1896

200 *copies printed.*

THE NATIVE AND WILD MAMMALS OF CONNECTICUT.

It is proposed in the following pages to give some account of the mammalian animals that exist, or have existed, within the limits of this State since the close of the pre-historic era. The present scope does not include those creatures that exist in a fossil condition only, nor those domestic mammals that have been introduced from other countries. On the other hand, it is not wholly limited to quadrupeds (for there are some mammals which are not quadrupedal), but some reference will be made to the pinnipeds (seals), the wing-handed (bats), and the cetaceans (such as whales and porpoises), for the seals, bats, whales, etc., are not only viviparous, but are also mammalian; that is, they not only bring forth their young alive, but they suckle and nurse them until they are able to care for themselves. These remarks will serve as a definition of the word Mammal, as it will be used in the succeeding pages.

About forty years ago (in 1857) Prof. Spencer F. Baird (probably the most competent authority on the subject in this country) made an official report to the United States Government, of all of the then known genera and species of *quadruped* mammals in North America. At that time his list contained a few species not found in the United States; but since the annexation of Alaska, it is quite likely that the *present* United States contains as many species as Prof. Baird's list foots up. Since then, some few species have been found and described. And if we add the mammalians *not* quadrupedal, it will be seen that his list may be considerably extended. As I foot up that list there were 55 genera, which were subdivided into 252 species.

Bearing in mind that this number of genera and species had been found in North America forty years ago, and that some have been discovered since that time, and that it includes neither the bats, the seal tribe, nor whales and other cetaceans, and we may fairly conclude that the numbers would now amount to at least 65 genera, and about 270 species. If this be so, how many genera and species have existed in Connecticut?

In entering upon this investigation let it be understood that we shall not attempt to *describe*, nor fully *define*, the different animals which we shall mention. The measurements of their crania,

their whole skeletons, their bodies, the forms and colors of their bodies and limbs, and their typical characteristics, are matters of zoölogical science rather than of history, and shall be left undiscussed here.

I shall also follow, in general, the nomenclature of Prof. Baird, rather than (in all cases) look for such changes as have been made therein by later scientists, such as Dr. Coues, Dr. Gill, and others.

The following named genera have not, as far as I can learn, been found in Connecticut, and so they may be dismissed at once :

	Genera.	Species.
Neosorex, blarina, and urotrichus, of the shrews and moles,	3	9
Bassaris, or civet-cats,	1	1
Taxidea, or badger,	1	1
Spermophilus, or ground squirrel,	1	15
Cynomys, or prairie dog,	1	2
Haplodontia, or sewellel,	1	1
Geomys, or pouched-gophers,	1	5
Thomomys, heap-gophers,	1	8
Dipodomys, or kangaro-rats,	1	5
Perognathus, tuft-tailed mice,	1	11
Sigmodon, or cotton-rats,	1	2
Myodes, or Lemmings,	1	3
Dasypus, or armadillo,	1	1
Dicotyles, or peccary,	1	1
Antilocapra, or pronghorn,	1	1
Haplocerus, or mountain-goat,	1	1
Ovis, or big-horn sheep,	1	1
Bos, or bison (buffalo) and musk-ox,	1	2
Total,	20	70

This, at first sight, would seem to leave 32 genera and 179 species, of those quadrupedal mammals, now or once existing in the United States, according to the list of Prof. Baird. But in addition to those excluded above, we must exclude some 130 species in the genera *partly* represented in Connecticut, but of which we have not *all* the species ; that is, we would still have about 29 genera and about 50 species in this State, besides the bats, seals, whales, and dolphins ; the latter being mammals, but not quadrupeds.

Fortunately, we are not without information on this subject, with especial reference to Connecticut. In 1840 Dr. Ebenezer Emmons of Middlefield, Mass., made an official report to the Legislature of that State, giving a list of its mammalian fauna. In 1842, James Elsworth DeKay of Oyster Bay, L. I., prepared a similar work for the State of New York. Both these gentlemen were eminent in the science of zoölogy, and the fauna of those states

would not materially differ from that of Connecticut. And in 1842, the Rev. Jas. H. Linsley of Stratford, Conn., prepared for the Yale Natural History Society a catalogue of all the mammals of Connecticut, including the bats, seals, whales, and dolphins. By the aid of these (with some changes made by myself) I have prepared a list of Connecticut mammals, past and present, which I conceive to be very nearly correct. This list is as follows :

Scientific Names of Genera.	Meanings of Sci. Names.	Common Names.	No. of Species in Connecticut.		
		FAMILY VESPERTILIONIDAE.			
Vespertilio.	Bat.	Bat.	4	Gen. 1.	Spec. 4
		FAMILY SORICINAE.			
Sorex.	Shrew.	Shrew-mouse.	4		
Scalops.	Digger.	Common-mole.	1		
Condylura.	Knuckle-tailed.	Star-nose mole.	2	Gen. 3.	Spec. 7
		FAMILY FELIDAE.			
Felis.	Cat.	Panther.	1		
Lynx.	Lynx (Glarer ?).	Wildcat.	2	Gen. 2.	Spec. 3
		FAMILY CANIDAE (*or Lupinae.*)			
Canis (*Lupus*).	Dog (Wolf).	Gray Wolf.	1		
Vulpes.	Fox, or Wolf.	Fox.	4	Gen. 2.	Spec. 5
		SUB-FAMILY MARTINAE.			
Mustela.	Weasel.	Fisher and Martin.	2		
Putorius.	Stinker.	Mink and Weasel.	4	Gen. 2.	Spec. 6
Gulo.	Gormandizer.	Wolverene.	1	Gen. 1.	Spec. 1
		SUB-FAMILY LUTRINAE.			
Lutra.	Otter (Land Otter).	Otter.	1	Gen. 1.	Spec. 1
		SUB-FAMILY MELINAE.			
Mephitis.	Pestilent.	Skunk.	1	Gen. 1.	Spec. 1
		FAMILY URSIDAE.			
Ursus.	Bear.	Black Bear.	1		
Procyon.	Dog (like).	Raccoon.	1	Gen. 2.	Spec. 2
		FAMILY DIDELPHIDAE.			
Didelphys.	Two-wombed.	Opossum.	1	Gen. 1.	Spec. 1
		FAMILY SCIURIDAE. (SUB-FAMILY SCIURINAE.)			
Sciurus.	Shadow-tail,	Squirrel.	4		
Pteromys.	Wing-mouse.	Flying-squirrel.	1		
Tamias.	Provider.	Chipmunk.	1		
Arctomys.	Bear-mouse.	Woodchuck.	1	Gen. 4.	Spec. 7
		SUB-FAMILY CASTORINAE.			
Castor.	Beaver.	Beaver.	1	Gen. 1.	Spec. 1
		SUB-FAMILY DIPODYNAE.			
Jaculus [*Zapus*].	Thrower.	Jumping-mouse.	1	Gen. 1.	Spec. 1
		SUB-FAMILY MURINAE.			
Mus.	Mouse.	Common rat and house-mouse.	4		
Hesperomys.	Western-mouse.	Deer-mouse, etc.	2		
Neotoma.	New Cut.	Wood-rat.	1	Gen. 3.	Spec. 7
		SUB-FAMILY ARVICOLINAE.			
Arvicola.	Plow-land mouse.	Meadow-mouse, Vole, etc.	3		
Fiber.	Beaver.	Musk-rat.	1	Gen. 2.	Spec. 4
		FAMILY HYSTRICIDAE.			
Erethizon.	Irritable.	Porcupine.	1	Gen. 1.	Spec. 1

Scientific Names of Genera.	Meanings of Sci. Names.	Common Names.	No. of Species in Connecticut.		
		FAMILY LEPORIDAE.			
Lepus.	Hare.	Hare, rabbit,	2	Gen. 1.	Spec. 2
		FAMILY CERVIDAE, OR STAG.			
Alce.	Elk, Moose.	Elk (or Moose).	1		
Tarandus.	Reindeer.	Woodland-reindeer.	1		
Rangifer.	Reindeer-beast.	Caribou.			
Cariacus.	Carcajou.	Deer (white-tailed).	1	Gen. 4.	Spec. 4
		FAMILY PHOCIDAE.			
Phoca.	Seal.	Harbor-seal.	1		
Cystophora.	Bladder (nose) bearing.	Hooded-seal.	1	Gen. 2.	Spec. 2
		FAMILY CETACEAE.			
Balæna.	Whale.	Right Whale.	1		
Physeter.	Blow-pipe.	Sperm Whale, or Cachalot.	2		
Balænoptera.	Fin-Whale.	Rorqual, or Fin-back.	1	Gen. 3.	Spec. 4
		FAMILY DELPHINIDAE.			
Delphinus.	Dolphin.	Sea-porpoise.	1		
Globiocephalus.	Ball-headed.	Social (or Caaing Whale).	1		
Phocæna.	Porpoise.	Porpoise, or Puffing-pig.	1		
Orca (*Grampus*).	Whale(?).	Grampus, Killer.	2	Gen. 4.	Spec. 5
Total, . . .		Genera, 42. Species, 69.			

In the foregoing list of mammals now and formerly existing within the limits of this State, neither extinct (or prehistoric) forms, nor those which have been introduced and domesticated from abroad are included. But an extinct species of mastodon will be referred to hereafter.

It may here be remarked, that not all the animals that once were with us, but are no longer present, were exterminated. Many of the fleet-footed, the biggest, and those most generally hunted (such as deer, wolves, bears, etc.) receded from the settled sections and escaped to more northerly and westerly regions; while animals of slower pace, or smaller, or less vigorously pursued, remained to be slaughtered later. Descendants of the former class may be found to the north and west of us; while descendants of the latter class, to some extent, are with us to-day. So, many of our western Indians are descended from ancestors who removed west from New England.

For the purposes of this paper, we will begin (so far as Connecticut mammals are concerned) with a single reference to species that became extinct in prehistoric times. Partial remains of the *Maston giganteus*, a huge proboscidean, much resembling the elephant, have been found in this State in at least three places, to wit: in New Britain, in Cheshire, and in Sharon. In Orange County, N. Y., such remains have been found nearly entire. Whether these great creatures, which perished in the

deep peat beds, were contemporaneous with our aboriginal Red men, is a point for paleontologists to determine, if they can.

Confining ourselves now, as far as may be, to the historical (rather than to the descriptive) features of this general subject, we will follow with some account of some of the mammals now or formerly found in a wild state in Connecticut.

Beginning with the four species of bats (of the genus *Vespertilio*) I know of no reason why they should not be present with us to-day. They are of no historical consequence. The red (or New York), and the little brown species, are most common with us.

The same remark is applicable to the four species of shrew-mice of the genus *Sorex;* the one common species of mole of the genus Scalops; and the two species of star-nosed mole of the genus Condylura; in all three genera and four species.

Coming to the cat family, we may say that one (and probably two) of our three species have become extinct. The largest of these was called by some of our ancestors the "catamount," by others, the "panther." Both names are old-world titles, the one meaning the European wildcat, the other (at least originally) the leopard. Hence it would be more accurate to designate our animals (as the zoölogists do) by the Indian name of puma, or cougar, which is also from the Indian. The puma, or panther, preyed upon the deer of our forests, as it still does upon the deer of the Adirondack region. Scientifically speaking, this animal is *Felis concolor* (or evenly-colored cat), but by dwellers in the backwoods of Maine it is sometimes called "lucifer"; a word which in this case means neither "light-bearer," "son of the morning," nor "Satan," but deer-wolf; being a corruption of the French *loup-cervier*, and so called because of its habit of capturing and devouring deer. In this sense the word lucifer is not defined in any dictionary with which I am acquainted.

As an inhabitant of Connecticut this animal is probably extinct, although it may occasionally stray within our borders from New York. But panthers (*pumas*) were once so numerous and destructive here that the legislature, in 1694, provided for the payment of a bounty of twenty shillings per head for each one killed.

A writer from Hartford to the New London *Gazette*, under date of February 27, 1767, says: "One night last week a panther having killed nine sheep in a yard at Windsor, the owner of the sheep, one Mr. Phelps, the next morning followed the panther by his track into a thicket about half a mile from his house, and shot him. He was brought to this town (Hartford) and the bounty of five pounds allowed by law was paid for his head."

The next creature of the cat family (probably extinct in this State) is the larger of the two lynxes (*Lynx borealis* or *Canadensis*), the northern or Canadian lynx. This lynx has been killed in Connecticut since the beginning of this century. If I mistake not, in the original Greek language from which the name lynx comes, it means a glarer, and certainly the "lynx-eye" would seem to deserve this description.

The smaller lynx (*Lynx rufus*), or bay-lynx, is still not rare in Connecticut; as witness the fact that not less than five of them have been killed in the town of Essex alone, in the past year, 1895. This, in common speech, is our wildcat. I have seen one caught in Litchfield County that was said to weigh 35 pounds. This is the same creature for the killing of which our legislature in 1856 authorized a bounty of five dollars to be paid. While the favorite prey of this creature is the wild rabbit, it is about as destructive in a sheepfold in the night season as a bull dog would be, and more destructive in a poultry-yard than any fox could be.

From the cat family we pass to that of the dog. And here we have, or have had, the wolf. Our wolf was the gray species, known in zoölogy as *Canis occidentalis*, or western dog. There are several varieties in this species, and I suppose ours to have been the variety *griseo-albus*, or pearlish gray-white. The Mohegan tribe of Indians derived its name from an Algonkin word meaning wolf.

These animals were very common here and much effort was made to destroy them. Our General Court in 1647 ordered a bounty of ten shillings to be paid by either of the towns of Windsor, Hartford, Wethersfield, or Farmington, within whose limits any wolf was killed. In 1662 the bounty was increased to fifteen shillings in every township. In the Code of 1650 it was enacted that the colony should pay a bounty of ten shillings, "by reason of wolves, which destroy great numbers of our cattle." In 1667, the bounty was made sixteen shillings — half to be paid by the colony and half by the township within whose limits the killing was done. "Wolf pens" (which really were wolf pits, or wolf pounds) were built in the towns, and probably also on lands not within any of the townships. Sometimes the Indians (who were not handy in constructing these pits) were supposed to steal wolves from pits belonging to White people, in order to secure the bounty paid to the captors. This led the General Court to repeal the bounty law, so far as Indians were concerned, whether they "kill or steale" wolves. "Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutored mind," etc. So late as the revision of 1808, a bounty of ten dollars for each adult wolf, and five dollars for each whelp was provided in our laws.

In Hartford, in 1650, Thomas Woodford, the town cryer, was employed at four shillings six pence per week to hunt for these creatures.

At Windsor, in 1667, the town and county bounty amounted to twenty-five shillings for each wolf killed. In that same year, one Eggleston was paid three pounds ten shillings for "four wolves, meeting house." Whether the wolves were slain *in* the meeting-house of that already old and respectable township, or in the adjoining yard or cemetery — the record does not state. So lately as 1839, Francis Beach of Goshen said that he had seen as many as three at one time in that township. And Jacob Beach said at the same time and place, that he had killed four wolves there in one year and had received the bounty for them. These animals must have been killed many years subsequent to the date of Putnam's adventure in the wolf-den in Pomfret. I mention this because I have heard it doubted whether there *were* any wolves in Connecticut at the date of said adventure.

The New Haven laws in 1656 provided a bounty of twenty shillings to any white man who should kill a wolf; but when an Indian killed one he was allowed only one-fourth as much. Another case of "Lo."

From a newspaper, published at Litchfield, December 5, 1786, we learn that on the 23d of that month the good people of Norfolk were assembled at their church for Thanksgiving services. Word was sent to them that wolves were in the neighborhood, and about eighty men turned out, armed themselves and went in pursuit of the animals. The wolves retreated to the woods of an adjacent mountain [" Haystack "], which was surrounded, and all of them (four) were captured. This must have been about the last *pack* of wolves in this state. Linsley (writing in 1842) says that one was killed near Bridgeport, in 1839; just 100 years later than Putnam's wolf killing.

The other genus of the dog family in Connecticut was that of *Vulpes*, or fox. The red fox is found in all townships in this state. The gray species still exists in some townships. The black (which is classed as a variety of the red) once existed here, as is attested by the Poet Brainard's beautiful lines, perpetuating the Indian legend of "The Black Fox of Salmon River." Salmon river lies between East Haddam and Haddam Neck.

Concerning the weasel family, of which in this state there have been four genera and eight species — we will say that the largest species is the land otter, of the genus *Lutra*. Occasionally this animal (valuable for its fur) may still be found by some solitary and wooded stream even in Hartford county.

Next to the otter in size was the fisher, otherwise *Mustela pen-*

nantii, or Pennant's weasel. This must have been the "weasel" mentioned by President Dwight in 1796, and said by him to weigh twelve pounds. Our ancestors sometimes called it black-cat, black-marten, and pekan; the latter probably Indian. But the Indians also called the fisher a "wolaneag;" a name which they also applied to a class of their fabulous evil spirits. If this be not the animal which our earliest (but not most accurate nor truthful) historian, (Rev. Samuel Peters,) so amusingly described under the name of "cuba" I am puzzled to know what one he means.

The fisher wore fine fur, was arboreal in its habits, and is said to have sought its fish food in the baited traps of hunters, rather than in watery element. It still may be found in northern New England.

The pine-marten (or American sable) is not found nearer to us to-day, probably, than in the Adirondack region. Its fur was too light colored to be entitled to the name of sable. The word marten is an old-world name of Germanic origin.

The mink, *Mustela* (or *Putorius*) *vison*, is common hereabouts. I have observed one in the water of Park river, and on its banks, opposite to the Hotel Heublein, within a few years. Although I kept the matter a secret, and would have had him remain, I fear his disappearance is final. His abode was under the roots of an overhanging tree, now blocked up by a retaining wall.

This creature seems to be the one described by the aforesaid Peters, very interestingly, if not accurately, under the name of "whapperknocker." I find neither this word nor his "cuba" in any dictionary.

The wolverene, or glutton (*Gulo luscus*), is the largest member of the weasel family. It is also called the carcajou and skunk-bear; but carcajou is also a name given to the puma and the larger lynx. This odious creature is classed with the quadrupeds of Connecticut on the ground of strong probability. It is known to have been an inhabitant of New York and Massachusetts.

There was a smaller mink, whose pelage was black and nearly as valuable as that of the Russian sable. Prof. Baird is inclined to class it as a variety, and not a distinct species. It is still found, I believe, in Massachusetts.

Another weasel, still found even in Hartford, is *Mephitis mephitica*, a name which indicates strongly pestilential qualities. The French Canadians called it enfant du Diable (Devil's child); and the Indians called it seganku, whence comes our own word, skunk. Ladies are acquainted with its fur under the trade name of Alaska sable and black-marten. This creature haunts our farmer's poultry yards, and, notwithstanding its predatory habits and its bad name, is not without its usefulness. It is a voracious

feeder on insects. I have observed that its feces contain, in large proportions, the undigested fragments of coleopterous insects.

Of the weasel proper, *Putorius*, four species probably remain in Connecticut. These are : the least, the small brown, Richardson's, and the New York weasel. They are not numerous enough, however, to appreciably reduce the number of rats of which they are the mortal enemy.

The family next in order is the bear, which includes (in Connecticut) the bear and the raccoon. The American black bear, *Ursus Americanus*, was the only strictly plantigrade creature we had in this state. Lacking a collar bone (and thus being able to bring its shoulders closely together), and being able to walk on its hinder feet — it was a powerful if not an affectionate hugger. Besides honey, acorns, grapes, and green corn, it invaded the pig-sty of the farmer and bore away his pigs. It was easily captured by trapping, clubbing, and shooting. It does not appear that our General Assembly ever offered a bounty for the destruction of bears. It is safe to say that, perhaps for fifty years, the bear has been extinct in Connecticut ; but he still abides in northern New England and in the Adirondack wilds, in company with the deer, panthers, etc., some of whose ancestors fled thither from this state. Linsley said, in 1842, that bears had been killed in this state within his recollection, and he was then 55 years old.

Jacob Beach, heretofore mentioned, said, to an audience of his townspeople, in Goshen, in 1839, that he had killed seventeen bears in one year in that township. Samuel Wilcox, at the same time and on the same occasion, said that he had killed sixteen in one year in Goshen. About 1810 bears were seen in Harwinton village, and one of them was killed. In September, 1766, one was found in an enclosure near the residence of Joseph Talcott (west side of Main street) in Hartford. The animal escaped into Main street and was pursued by people armed with sticks and stones, as far south as Buckingham street. Thence he turned easterly, through Charter Oak street, and reached the South Meadow, where he was shot. There still remain buildings on Main street from which were witnessed that wild-bear hunt in our principal thoroughfare. I have been in a house in South Wethersfield, from the back door of which a bear was shot by the grandfather of the person who gave me the particulars. A remnant of the little grove of black-oak trees in which the bear was killed may still be seen.

The other member of the bear family is our raccoon, *Procyon lotor*. This pretty climbing creature is easily domesticated. He has a habit of washing his food, and hence his specific name, *lotor*. It may be found in this county and within a few miles of this city. He is quite partial to the ears of green corn.

As to the opossum, our only marsupial mammal, I can say only that De Kay includes it among New York's creatures; and I have been told that one was caught in East Granby within the memory of people now living, some fifty-five years ago.

Of the squirrel family (or shadow-tails, as the word means), five genera and seven species are enumerated for Connecticut; but of these, one, the woodchuck, cannot be characterized as self-shading by its tail.

The fox and black squirrels must be uncommon in this State; but the black squirrel is supposed to be a variety of the gray species. The gray, the red, the flying squirrel, and the chipmunk are still common here. I have seen all of them in Bushnell Park. The flying squirrel was seen in nests in two of its oldest elm trees the last summer.

The woodchuck (*Arctomys*, meaning bear-mouse) is quite common on our farms. Its favorite food is apples and clover blossoms. It is most common on cultivated farms, and follows civilization everywhere. And civilization follows *him* — with a gun!

Of the beaver family we had but one genus and species, *Castor fiber*. Beaver is an old world name for another nearly allied European species. Our Indians called it tommunque. A stream in Pomfret (its ancient name being Tommunquas) is derived from the Indian word for beaver. The Red men did not often use the names of animals in connection with natural features of the country. The explanation may be the fact that bears, deer, wolves, and beaver were so common that no one locality was particularly noted for their presence. But our ancestors had many "Beaver Brooks" and "Beaver Meadows," and many of these descriptive titles remain to-day.

Beaver were very common about Hartford. In 1637, when the General Court rated wampum-peag (made from parts of the shell of the quahaug clam) at four to the penny, beaver-skins were rated at nine shillings per pound, and they were actually used as currency. I do not find that any legislative measures were taken to prevent their extermination, and now, alas! they are gone from Connecticut, and perhaps from New England, forever.

The remains of their dams, which were constructed of perishable material, are now sometimes seen; and submerged trunks of trees are sometimes exhumed, as in Wethersfield, bearing the marks of their cutting-teeth, made in felling the trees from which the dams were built.

In the mouse family (*Mures*) I will include the jumping-mouse (not a mouse), the rats, mice, and voles (or meadow-mice). And

we must also include the muskrat, which is now classed among the meadow-mice, and not in the beaver family, as formerly. They make six genera and twelve species.

The jumping-mouse (one species), deer-mouse (one species), wood-rat (perhaps) the meadow-mice and voles (three species), in all six species, all believed to be in Connecticut, I will dismiss at once as being non-historical.

The common house-mouse (*Mus musculus*), and perhaps one other species, are European. They may have arrived in this country with the first cargo of grain from abroad.

The black-rat (*Mus rattus*, or rat-mouse) is the common "house-rat" of England. It is said to have made its advent to America as early as 1550. It is smaller than the common rat, and less vigorous and combative. When the common rat arrived the black-rat was fought and expelled by it, and now it is probably extinct in this State, and a few are to be found in New England.

The common or Norway rat (*Mus decumanus*, or big mouse), is said by Prof. Baird to have reached England in 1730, France in 1750, and America in 1775. It is conceded that it did not come from Norway, and the evidence is nearly conclusive that it reached England from China. Naturally, it was first discovered (in America) at the wharves, where it first landed, and being a good swimmer it received the name of "wharf-rat." And here, I am able to produce evidence that it reached America at least 35 years earlier than the date assigned to that event by Prof. Baird. In the second volume of *Town Votes of Wethersfield* (under date of Dec. 16, 1741), there is recorded a vote offering a bounty of two pence per head for each of "the larger sort of rat called wharf rat," killed in Wethersfield.

We may add that "white rats" and "white mice" are not distinct species, but are as much freaks of albinism as the white crow, etc.

One more animal of the mouse family, the largest member of it, remains to be mentioned. This is the muskrat, or, in Indian, musquash. Its musky odor is indicated in its English name, and the first syllable of its Indian name has nothing to do with the Latin *mus*, in *Mus rattus*, etc. This animal, which has been transferred from the beaver family to the mouse family, is so common hereabouts that I need not do more than mention it. Muskrats are seen within Bushnell Park after every spring freshet. Its fur is known in the fur trade as "river sable."

The porcupine, an insectiverous creature, once an inhabitant of Connecticut, probably has become extinct here. It may still linger in Massachusetts, as it certainly does in northern New England. And Linsley tells us that one was killed in Huntington about 1840.

Of hares, our common (so called) wild-rabbit, is a species. Strictly speaking, as at present classified, we have not, nor have we ever had, any wild rabbits in Connecticut. We have rabbits, but only domesticated ones from Europe. In addition we have, or have had, the northern hare (*Lepus Americanus*), which is sometimes called the wild white-rabbit. I suppose it is in Connecticut still. The animal which we commonly call "wild-rabbit," or "gray-rabbit" is *Lepus sylvaticus*, or wood-hare.

Having disposed briefly of the insectivora, the carnivora, and the rodentia, we have come to the last of the great orders of quadrupedal mammals, to wit, the ruminantia, or animals that "chew their cud," and are ungulate, or hoofed. And here we have but a single family to deal with, that of the Cervidae, or stags.

Here we begin with the largest and most ungainly species and genus; that of the animal bearing the old-world name of elk, or, more commonly, the new-world name of moose. The latter is from the Algonkin word *musu*, meaning wood-eater. In *Wood's New England Prospect* he says: "There be not many of these in Massachusetts Bay, but forty miles to the northeast of Boston there be a great store of them." This was in 1634. In *Morton's New English Canaan* (published in 1637) he is somewhat explicit in describing the moose. He says: "I will speake of the Elke, which the Salvages call a Mose; it is a very large Deare, with a very faire head and a broade palm," . . . "6 foote wide between the tips." . . . "He is of the bigness of a great horse." This was in the vicinity of Plymouth. Being so near to Connecticut, it is fair to assume that they sometimes were in our limits, for Plymouth is as far south as northern Connecticut. But to-day the moose is not found in New England south of Maine. He is the sole representative of the genus *Alce*.

The herd which Gen. Waitstill Winthrop kept on Fisher's Island (then in Connecticut, where it ought to be now) was brought from New York, probably from west of the Hudson river. Winthrop was then owner of Fisher's Island (in 1713) and he intended to present this herd of moose to Queen Anne. But the animals were destroyed, mostly by marauders, before Winthrop could ship them.

One species of the genus *Tarandus* we probably had, the woodland reindeer. Its favorite food, reindeer-moss, abounds on our elevated ridges.

Of the genus *Rangifer* we had one species called caribou and elk, which still survives in Maine, and was until lately in the Adirondack wilds. The word caribou is Canadian French. The wapiti, an animal much resembling the reindeer, may have been

here, for its range is said to have been as far south as the Carolinas. Wapiti is an Indian word.

This brings us to our deer (*Cariacus Virginianus*), the Virginian or white-tailed deer. It was very common in Connecticut, and may still stray into our borders from Barnstable County, Mass., where it is still found wild. Much of the clothing of our ancestors was made from deer skins. When our statutes were revised in 1786, an act providing stringent penalties against the killing of these animals (especially such as were within any of the "parks" reserved for their protection) was passed.

This concludes our list of four-footed and wing-handed mammals, and brings us to the pinnipeds or fin-footed mammals, voracious feeders on fish. Most common of these is the harbor seal, *Phoca vitulina*. We have them in Long Island Sound. One was brought thence a few years since and kept in our Garden street reservoir for some weeks. He finally escaped, and had nearly reached Park River, by way of Gulley Brook, when he was recaptured, taken to the Sound, and there liberated. It may be said that our adventurers who hunted the fur-seal in far southern and far northern waters, took their first lessons in seal-catching by hunting hair-seals in our own waters. Hair-seal caps were once much in vogue.

Lindsley included the hooded (or bladder-nosed) seal, as one of our animals, but whether it still abides with us I cannot say.

Of the cetacean mammals, such as whales, porpoises, etc., I can say but little. They were so common in the Sound as to become the subject of legislation in 1647. It was then enacted that, "Yf Mr. Whiting, with any others, shall make tryall and prosecute a design for the taking of Whales, within these libertyes, and if upon tryall within the term of two years, they shall like to goe on, noe others shall be suffered to interrupt them, for the tearme of seaven yeares." Miss Caulkins quotes from *Hempstead's Diary*, under date of January 13, 1748, "Comfort Davis hath hired my whale boat to go a whaling to Fisher's Island, till the 29th of next month; to pay twenty shillings for her hire," etc. I suppose these were what is called, in whalers' language, "right" whales, *Balæna mysticetus;* but Linsley credits us with having had the sperm whale, *Physeter macrocephalus*, and the rorqual, otherwise known as the fin-back, and beaked whale. A right whale, taken into Montauk, yielded sixty barrels of oil.

Lastly, there are the porpoises, etc., of the dolphin family. These are all mammals; but the vividly *brilliant* dolphin is not mammalian, but a true fish. Of the mammalian dolphins, Linsley mentions, for Connecticut, the common porpoise, or puffing-pig, the social whale, the sea porpoise; possibly, the narwhal, or sea

unicorn, and the killer, or orca, otherwise called grampus — three genera and four species. The common porpoise (*Phocæna communis*), perhaps the smallest of the cetaceans, yet yields (when you can catch him) from three to seven gallons of oil, so it is of some importance in a commercial sense. The social-whale, so called, is by sailors, more generally called "blackfish." How many of all these species, if any, have departed within the last fifty years I have not attempted to ascertain.

It may be in order here to refer to a creature not commonly recognized as ever existent. In 1710, in the winter, some four or five men claimed (and apparently made the Rev. Saml. Russell believe) that they had seen, lying on a rock, off Branford, a creature "about 12 feet long; the head, hair, face, neck, breast, and arms, resembling a woman; something of a tawny color. The hinder part of the creature resembled a fish, of the color of a mackerel, with a forked tail." The animal escaped. Instead of trying to take it in out of the wintry cold, the men (so they said) tried to kill it.

If this account does not describe a mermaid, then no such being ever was; which, perhaps, is the case.

In connection with this whole subject, one thought comes prominently to my mind; and that is this: that notwithstanding the great variety in our mammalian fauna, no species in it could be made available to our ancestors, for any useful domestic purpose. No attempt was made either here or in other parts of our country, to domesticate any species native here, or in any part of the United States. There was a representative (the peccary) of the hog family in the southwest. The sheep family was represented by the bighorn in the Rocky mountains; and the goat, very nearly, by the so-called Rocky Mountain goat. The horse did not exist in America, until it was introduced from Europe. But there were, perhaps, millions to represent the ox family in the buffaloes (bison); and there were some musk-oxen. In short, our domestic swine, horses, sheep, goats, asses (and of course, mules), horned-cattle; and even our cats, rabbits, and dogs, were brought from Europe. The Indians (except the Eskimos) had no dogs until they got them from the English. They had only wolves to represent the dog family; and their cats were panthers and lynxes. And all these are fast becoming extinct. Even the Red Men themselves seem destined to be exterminated or to be merged in other more civilized species of the genus *Homo*, from the Eastern hemisphere.

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